

## Head teacher has to clean school toilets

26th March, 2019



Times are hard for schools in England because they have so little money to spend. They have to cut back on many things. There is austerity in the UK so the government has cut school budgets. One head teacher

at a school in London does not have enough money to pay for cleaners or canteen staff. This means she has to help to clean the toilets and serve students in the school cafeteria. Ms Siobhan Lowe is head of Tolworth Girls' School in south London. She recently told reporters that she was embarrassed because her school did not have enough money to support her students. Ms Lowe said she has sold school land, cut subjects and fired her deputy-head teacher to keep her school open.

The south London school is typical of many schools in the UK. Thousands of head teachers have to make difficult decisions about how to spend their school's money. More than 7,000 head teachers recently wrote to 3.5 million parents to explain why the schools have no money. Many parents have become volunteers at schools to help the children. Some schools have asked parents to provide toilet paper and other basics for the school toilets and classrooms. One school only has enough money to give students one sheet of A4 paper a month. Head teachers want to meet the UK's education secretary, but he refused to meet them. The UK's Department for Education said funding for education was a government priority.

Sources: [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [inews.com](http://inews.com) / [edexec.co.uk](http://edexec.co.uk)

## Writing

Education should be a government's top priority. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

times / spend / austerity / budgets / canteen / toilets / embarrassed / money / open / typical / thousands / decisions / parents / toilet paper / classrooms / education / A4

## True / False

- a) The article said times are oft in England. T / F
- b) The UK is cutting school budgets because of austerity. T / F
- c) A head teacher has to serve her students in the school cafeteria. T / F
- d) A head teacher has sold land to keep her school open. T / F
- e) Head teachers have written to 7,000 parents about a lack of money. T / F
- f) Many parents are volunteering to help schools. T / F
- g) All students get 10 sheets of A4 paper each month. T / F
- h) The UK education secretary agreed to meet the head teachers. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <b>hard</b>        | a. a short time ago |
| 2. <b>cut</b>         | b. red-faced        |
| 3. <b>head</b>        | c. sufficient       |
| 4. <b>embarrassed</b> | d. reduced          |
| 5. <b>support</b>     | e. supply           |
| 6. <b>typical</b>     | f. provide for      |
| 7. <b>recently</b>    | g. difficult        |
| 8. <b>provide</b>     | h. money            |
| 9. <b>enough</b>      | i. representative   |
| 10. <b>funding</b>    | j. leader           |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What difficult decisions do teachers have to make?
- c) Who was your favourite teacher (and why)?
- d) Would you volunteer to help a school?
- e) What can a student do with one sheet of A4 paper per month?
- f) How can schools be made better?
- g) How much of a priority should education be?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the head teacher?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Times are hard                        | a. volunteers at schools   |
| 2. They have to cut                      | b. deputy-head teacher     |
| 3. clean the toilets and serve students  | c. school land             |
| 4. Ms Lowe said she has sold             | d. basics                  |
| 5. cut subjects and fired her            | e. for schools in England  |
| 6. The south London school is typical of | f. government priority     |
| 7. Many parents have become              | g. paper a month           |
| 8. provide toilet paper and other        | h. back on many things     |
| 9. one sheet of A4                       | i. many schools in the UK  |
| 10. funding for education was a          | j. in the school cafeteria |

## Discussion – Student B

- What was or is your school like?
- What did your teachers do besides teach lessons?
- Are times hard in your country?
- How important is it to budget?
- Should a head teacher have to clean toilets?
- Why is there austerity in the UK?
- What advice do you have for the head teacher?
- What more can the head teacher do for her students?

## Spelling

- There is eiyrasttu in the UK
- cut school gdsuubet
- in the school aaifrcet
- she was raebersmdas
- money to popstru her students
- fired her dtueyp-head teacher
- actilpy of many schools
- have to make difficult scdnsoiie
- teachers crlnetye wrote to 3.5 million parents
- parents have become eusolevtrn
- he udfsree to meet them
- a government orpriyti

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. f
6. i	7. a	8. e	9. c	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – English

You think English is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, coding or sports.

### Role B – Art

You think art is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): English, coding or sports.

### Role C – Coding

You think coding is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, English or sports.

### Role D – Sports

You think sports is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, coding or English.

## Speaking – Subjects

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important school subjects at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| • coding     | • English |
| • biology    | • history |
| • sports     | • maths   |
| • literature | • art     |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.